

Division of Science, Research and Technology



Fact Sheet

June 2004



New Jersey State Parks and Forests Economic Benefits and Vital Statistics

The State's 39 Parks and 11 Forests constitute a vital natural resource for the residents of New Jersey. These areas provide not only environmental but also substantial economic benefits amounting to at least \$1.2 billion annually or \$17.2 billion in present value terms (over a 25 year-period at a discount rate of 5%). In their current protected state, the State Parks and Forests generate the following benefits:

- ⌘ Benefits from recreation/tourism: \$812.4 million annually including benefits from the indirect economic activity generated by recreation and tourism expenditures;
- ⌘ Benefits from ecosystem services (e.g., watershed protection/hydrological services, wildlife/biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration and storage, soil erosion control, and groundwater protection): a minimum of \$139.5 million per year;
- ⌘ Benefits from the direct and indirect economic activity generated from the operating and capital expenditures for the State Parks and Forests: \$227.8 million per year; and
- ⌘ Benefits reflected in the willingness of State residents to pay for the existence of the State Parks and Forests: a minimum of \$40.2 million annually.

The benefits also include creation of almost 14,000 jobs. Other benefits that were identified as being of significant value although not quantified are positive impacts on property values, education and other public services, and partial regulation of development.

Some vital indicators and statistics show how the New Jersey State's Parks and Forests compare with other state parks in the rest of the country:

State Park & Forest Area

	No.	Area (acres)	% of Total Area of State
NJ	50	376,532	7.93
Average for All States	80	245,017	1.05

Use Density (Visitation Per Unit Area)

	Visitation	Area (acres)	Visitation per Acre
NJ	15,039,719	376,532	39.9
Average for All States	11,164,320	245,017	45.6

Per Capita Park Visitation

	Visitation	Population (2002)	Visitation per Person
NJ	15,039,719	8,590,300	1.7
Average for All States	758,215,982	288,368,698	2.6

Fiscal Trends - Operating Expenditures by Source (million \$, 2002)

	Total	Park Revenues	General Fund	Dedicated Funds	Federal Fund	Others
NJ	36.8	3.1	33.7	—	—	—
Average for All States	37.8	13.3	18.3	4.1	0.5	1.4

Fiscal Trends - Capital Expenditures by Source (million \$, 2002)

	Total	Park Revenues	General Fund	Dedicated Funds	Bonds	Federal Fund	Others
NJ	10.7	—	8.6	—	2.1	—	—
Average for All States	15.6	1.3	1.7	4.6	7.0	0.8	0.3

Financing by Revenue Sources (million \$, 2002)

	Entrance Fees	Camping	Group Facilities	Lodges	Restaurants/Concessions	Other	Total Operations
NJ	1.8	0.7	0.4	—	0.4	3.5	5.3
Average for All States	3.4	4.1	1.7	3.2	3.5	2.3	6.6

Fiscal Trends - Parks' Share of State Expenditures (million \$, 2002)

	Total State Expenditures	State Park Operating Budget	% Share of State Budget
NJ	23.3	36.8	0.16
Average for All States	17.5	37.8	0.24

Data Sources:

- NJDEP Division of Science, Research and Technology. 2004. *The Economic Value of New Jersey State Parks and Forests*. Trenton, New Jersey.
- National Association of State Park Directors. 2003. *The 2003 Annual Information Exchange*. Tucson, Arizona.

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